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Letter dated 8 June 2012 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit the attached letter dated 31 May 2012, from the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, forwarding a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 February to 30 April 2012 (see annex).

(*Signed*) BAN Ki-moon

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Annex

Letter dated 31 May 2012 from the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 2011 (2011), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period from 1 February to 30 April 2012 (see enclosure). I would appreciate it if you could make this report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Anders Fogh **Rasmussen**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

Introduction

1. The present report, pursuant to the request in Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 2011 (2011), informs the United Nations on the progress of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from 1 February to 30 April 2012. As at 18 April 2012, total ISAF strength stood at 128,961 personnel provided by all 28 NATO countries and 22 non-NATO countries. NATO and ISAF reiterate their invitation to additional United Nations Member States to support this United Nations-mandated mission by providing advisers and trainers to the Afghan National Security Forces, as well as increase their funding support to the Afghan security forces and support for the civilian sectors of governance and development.

2. Throughout the reporting period, ISAF continued to assist the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. From 1 February to 30 April 2012, ISAF suffered 731 casualties, including 53 killed in action, 642 wounded in action and 36 non-battle-related deaths.

3. During the reporting period, the number of reported security incidents remained in line with seasonal trends, albeit at lower levels compared to the same period of the previous year. The decreased levels are likely due to the winter weather (with a normal to slightly above normal snowpack), the continuously improving capabilities of the Afghan security forces and the high operational tempo maintained by the Afghan and ISAF forces. The insurgency was unable to reclaim lost ground but, despite losses, remain resilient and pragmatic. In those geographic areas transitioned to Government control, the Afghan security forces proved capable of maintaining, or even further improving the security situation. The progress of the Afghan forces was definitely prominent during the insurgent attacks in Kabul on 15 April. Although the insurgent attacks garnered significant media attention worldwide, they were ineffective from a military perspective. As stated publicly by the Commander of ISAF, the Afghan security forces responded quickly and professionally to the attacks, and their countermeasures were well led and well coordinated with very limited assistance from ISAF.

4. Additional noteworthy events during the reporting period:

(a) On 20 February, the mishandling of Islamic religious material and Korans at the United States detention facility in Parwan Province resulted in widespread and violent demonstrations across the country. While not responsible for the burning, ISAF immediately expressed its regret to the Afghan people and reiterated that nothing in the ISAF mission was intended to defame Islam or desecrate the Koran. The overall performance of the Afghan security forces in handling the public reaction was commendable;

(b) On 7 April, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board discussed the issue of the future size and structure of the Afghan security forces and agreed that a preliminary analysis showed that funding of $4.1 billion annually, including from the Government of Afghanistan resources and contributions from the international community, would be enough to sustain an Afghan security force capable of

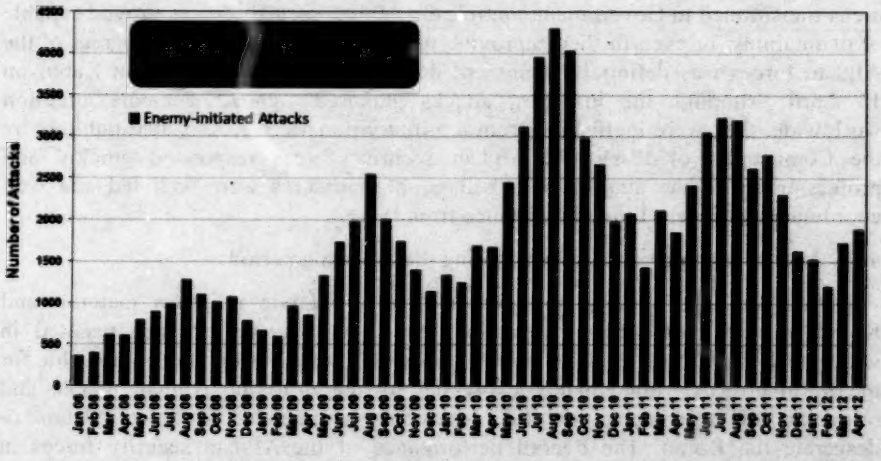
providing sufficient security against foreseeable threats. The preliminary model for a future Afghan force, as defined by the international community and the Government of Afghanistan, envisages a force strength of 228,500. This number and other planning assumptions will be subject to revision, in accordance with conditions on the ground and through mutual agreement between Afghanistan and the international community;

(c) Following the signature by the United States of America and the Government of Afghanistan of a memorandum of understanding transferring the lead to Afghan forces in all special operations missions in Afghanistan involving United States forces, the decision that ISAF special operations follow the same principles was taken. In future, special operations will be approved by the Afghan Operational Coordination Group and will be conducted by Afghan forces in accordance with Afghan laws;

(d) On 14 April, Salhuddin Rabbani (son of the previous, assassinated Chair of the High Peace Council, Burhanuddin Rabbani) was formally appointed as the new Chair of the Council by President Karzai.

Security situation

5. Enemy-initiated attacks have again declined, with an 11 per cent decrease over 2011. Insurgent efforts to maintain operations through the winter with high-profile attacks and assassinations were largely ineffective, owing to a combination of Afghan security force and ISAF operations. In addition, the winter weather, which after a number of mild winters returned to normal, had an impact on the insurgent activity. The insurgents are now preparing for the forthcoming fighting season and protecting their expected revenue sources associated with the ongoing poppy harvest.

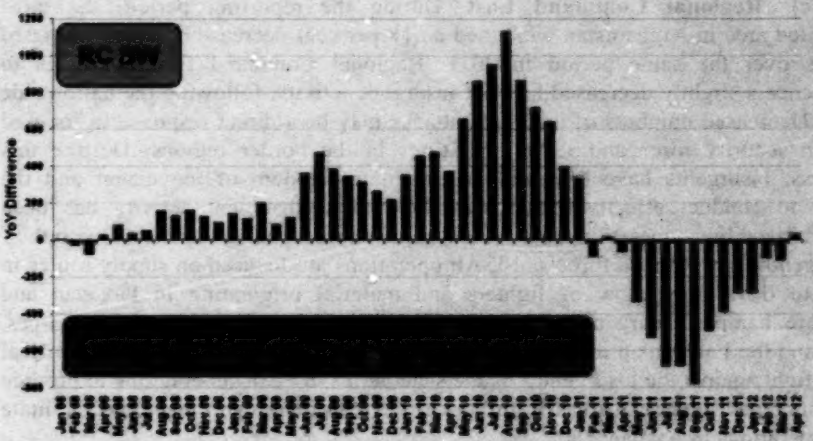


6. The insurgency continued to give priority to the use of improvised explosive devices, avoiding direct engagement. The assassination attempts against Government officials will continue in order to disrupt the Government's ability to carry out effective governance and to discredit its ability to provide security among the Afghan population. During the reporting period, 67 per cent of civilian

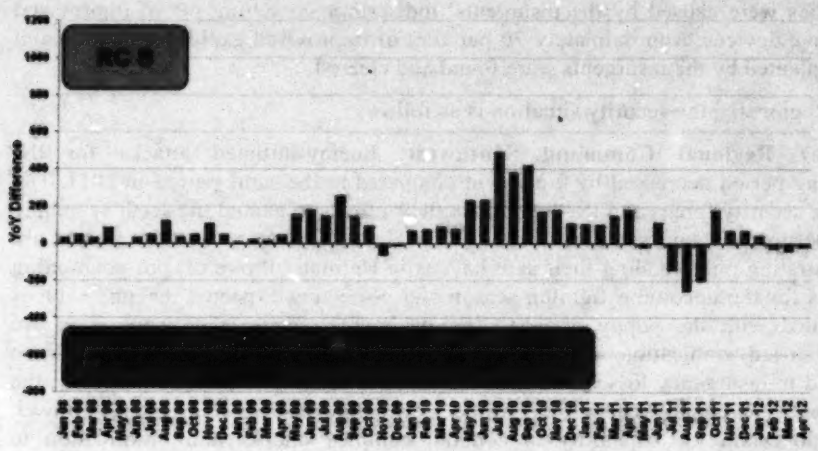
casualties were caused by the insurgents' indiscriminate setting off of improvised explosive devices. Approximately 70 per cent of improvised explosive devices and mines planted by the insurgents were found and cleared.

7. Regionally, the security situation is as follows:

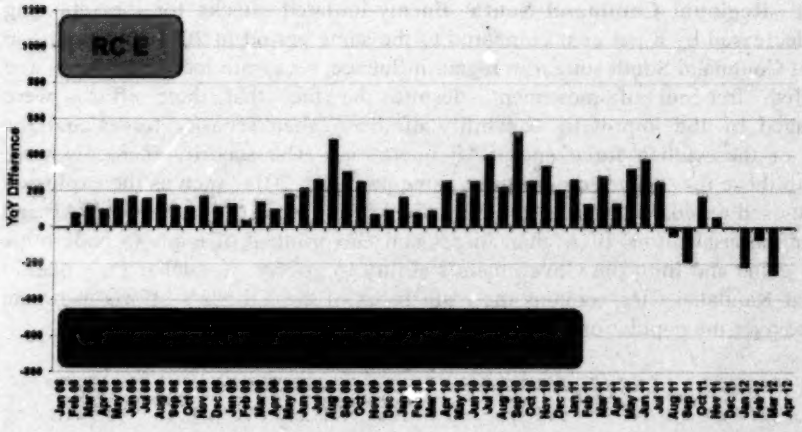
(a) **Regional Command Southwest**. Enemy-initiated attacks for the reporting period decreased by 9 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. The Afghan security forces and ISAF continue their efforts to extend the security bubble into the northern and southern districts of Helmand Province. The insurgents are concentrating on defending their safe havens in Helmand Province, pre-positioning fighters for the upcoming fighting season and protecting expected revenue sources associated with the poppy harvest. The insurgents' focus is on countering the Governor-led eradication efforts. Afghan security force and ISAF efforts have resulted in insurgency losses and financial and logistic shortages that will force the insurgency to employ economy-of-force tactics to conserve their combat power. They do retain the capability to conduct complex attacks and intimidation to undermine the Government's security and governance efforts;



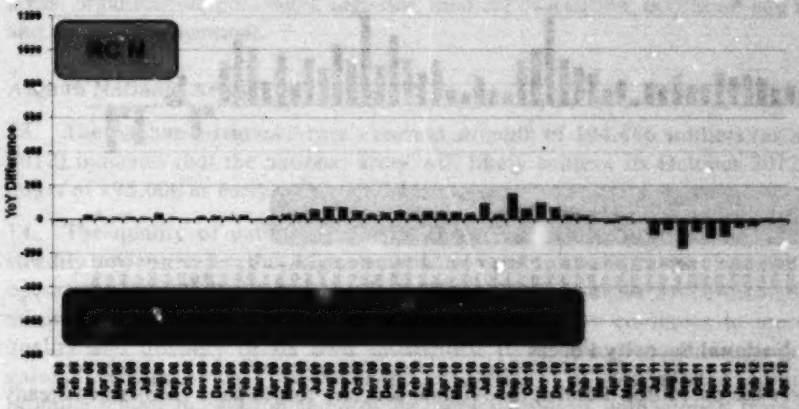
(b) **Regional Command South**. Enemy-initiated attacks for the reporting period decreased by 8 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. Insurgents in Regional Command South sought to regain influence, recapture lost safe havens and re-establish freedom of movement, despite the fact that their efforts were discouraged by the improving capability of the Afghan security forces and the success of the Afghan force and ISAF operations. The security incidents were similar to those that occurred during the same period in 2011, such as the explosion of improvised explosive devices targeting the Afghan security forces and ISAF and increasing assassinations of Afghan forces and Government officials to undermine security gains and limit the Government's ability to govern. Kandahar Province, in particular Kandahar City, remains the main focus of the Taliban's efforts to regain influence over the population;



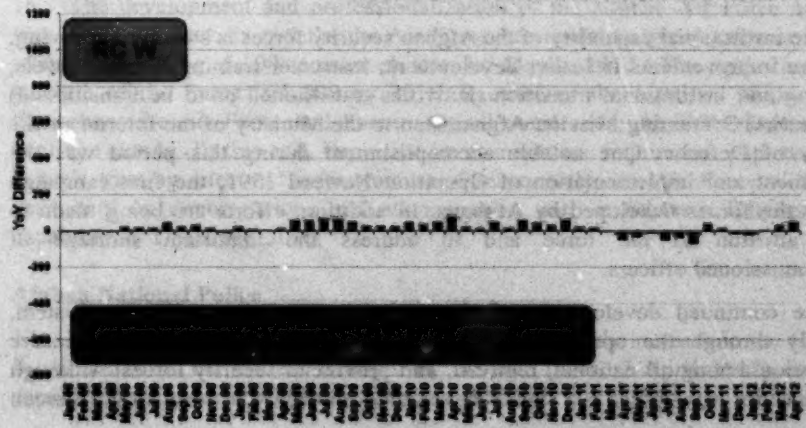
(c) **Regional Command East**. During the reporting period, the most populated area in Afghanistan witnessed an 18 per cent decrease in enemy-initiated attacks over the same period in 2011. Regional Command East continues to experience a slightly decreased level of insurgent activity, following the nationwide trend. Decreased numbers of insurgent attacks may be a direct response to focused Afghan security force and ISAF operations in the border regions. Despite this progress, insurgents have been able to maintain freedom of movement and the ability to conduct effective attacks in the region. Insurgent activity has been characterized by cooperation from several separate insurgent groups, each with their own agenda. The Afghan force and ISAF operations are focused on supply routes in order to disrupt the flow of fighters and material originating in Pakistan and therefore hamper insurgent operations. Cooperation between the Afghan forces, ISAF and the Palestinian military has improved this quarter and will remain critical in the fight against the insurgency, as the sanctuaries in Pakistan continue to provide the insurgency with safe areas from which they can plan, coordinate and facilitate their operations in Afghanistan;



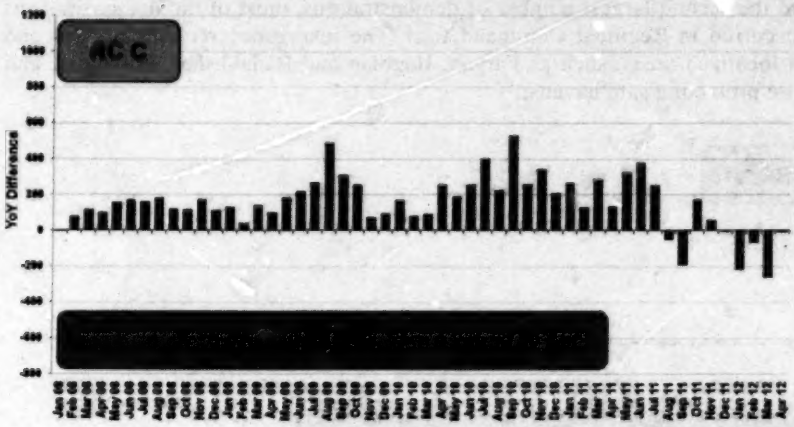
(d) **Regional Command North**. Regional Command North has seen a decrease in enemy-initiated attacks for eleven consecutive months. During the reporting period, such attacks decreased by 29 per cent compared to the same period last year. There has been a continuing trend of decreasing insurgent activity in this last quarter in Regional Command North. Owing to a lack of capabilities and severe winter conditions, insurgents avoided direct engagement with ISAF forces and concentrated on improvised explosive device strikes against and assassinations of Afghan security forces and Government officials. Following the mishandling of religious materials at Bagram Airfield in February 2012, Regional Command North witnessed the second largest number of demonstrations, most of the demonstrations having occurred in Regional Command East. The insurgency remains present and active in localized areas, such as Faryab, Baghlan and Badakhshan Provinces, and focused on protecting safe havens;



(e) **Regional Command West**. During the reporting period, enemy-initiated attacks increased by 39 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. Against a very low baseline, Regional Command West continues to display a consistently low level of enemy-initiated attacks. Insurgents are trying to maintain their current safe havens as they suffered a significant loss of influence and control over many areas during the past fighting season. Insurgent actions will continue to increase as the weather improves and prior to the start of the poppy harvest;



(f) **Regional Command Capital**. Regional Command Capital, which has fully entered the transition process, has the lowest number of attacks for any of the Regional Commands. During the reporting period, there was a slight decrease in enemy-initiated attacks, owing to improved Afghan security force capacity and harsh winter weather conditions. The attacks in Kabul on 15 April were the most significant events during this period. Despite the successes of the Afghan forces, Kabul will remain a primary target of insurgent operations because of the significant media and political attention that incidents in the capital can generate.



Afghan National Security Forces

8. Over the past three months, the Afghan security forces have maintained steady increases in overall force size and are on track to meet the approved 352,000 end strength goal by October 2012. This strength target is intended to provide security for all of Afghanistan by the end of 2014 and is designed to enable the consolidation of ISAF gains and the successful transition to Afghan-led security. To this end, the Afghan forces demonstrated an increasing ability to synchronize security operations across Afghanistan and to ensure the security in areas already transitioned with less ISAF direct support. As stated in the previous reports, the professionalization of the Afghan security forces is ongoing at a high tempo to successfully foster the Afghan lead for security and the effectiveness of the forces.

9. The institutional capability of the Afghan security forces is steadily improving. There are improvements in leader development, instructor training, literacy levels, equipping and institutional transition (activities transitioned or to be transitioned) from the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan to the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Defence. One notable accomplishment during this period was the development and implementation of Operation Naweed 1391, the first campaign plan for the forces developed by Afghans. In addition, efforts are being made to reduce attrition in the force and to address the important shortage of non-commissioned officers.

10. The continued development of the national security coordination system, especially through the operations coordination centres, is important to ensure coordination among all national, regional, and provincial security forces. Although the Afghan security forces are slowly developing an ability to react to unforeseen

events, their response to the insurgent attacks in Kabul on 15 April demonstrated their growing capability. Similarly, the forces' ability to plan and project security for significant static events is improving quickly.

11. Continued training and focus on the Afghan security forces' special skills, literacy, cross-coordination and command and control will be important over the next six months in both preventing the insurgency from regaining lost ground and ensuring the successful transition of security responsibility to the forces in key terrain areas. At this stage, ISAF partnering and advising efforts remain necessary to reinforce the overall cohesion of the security system and to foster the Afghan personnel's willingness at every level.

12. The health-care system of the Afghan security forces is being developed with a focus on the development of the Warrior Care Programme, highlighting six key areas: organization, personnel, logistics, medical evacuation, education and training, and quality management.

Afghan National Army

13. The Afghan National Army's current strength of 194,466 soldiers (as at March 2012) indicates that the national army will likely achieve its October 2012 growth target of 195,000 as early as May 2012.

14. The quality of national army headquarters and units is growing slowly but steadily and provides the Afghans with an improved ability to plan and execute operations independently and to effectively tackle the attacks of the insurgents with minimal support from ISAF. Furthermore, as the army continues to increase the quality and quantity of its own instructors, its training system is progressively gaining independence. The Ministry of Defence of Afghanistan continues to promote female integration and provide literacy training, with support from ISAF, to both new recruits and those currently serving.

15. The NATO Training Mission, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence, continues its efforts to professionalize the force, diminish leader shortfalls, decrease attrition rates and improve staff planning, tactical coordination and the army's logistical capabilities.

Afghan Air Force

16. The development and professionalization of the Afghan Air Force are under way. Over the past six months the Air Force has made marginal gains in its force strength, reaching 5,500 personnel late in March 2012. The authorized force strength of the Force is 8,000 by 2016. Because of the technical skills required throughout the Air Force and human capital constraints, the Force's growth will continue slowly. To this end, important investments are required to improve the Air Force's training sites and infrastructure. Consequently, the Air Force will remain dependent on donor nations and other support until it achieves full operational capability by December 2016.

Afghan National Police

17. The Afghan National Police has maintained a steady increase in the size of its force, and with the current strength of 149,642 (as at 7 April 2012), it will be capable of achieving its October 2012 growth target of 157,000. The national police

continues to focus its efforts on recruiting direct entry non-commissioned officers and training and promoting patrolmen in order to increase its non-commissioned officer ranks.

18. The operational effectiveness of the national police has been improving at a pace acceptable to sustain transition. The fraction of operations that were partnered remained high, with an increasing percentage being led by the Afghan security forces. Trends in the assessment ratings of the national police continued to be positive, showing increased numbers of units rated "effective with advisers" or better. Afghan perceptions of the national police appear to have generally improved as well, showing an increased awareness of the presence of the security forces and generally positive trends in the professionalism and independence of the national police. On 3 May, the Minister of the Interior hosted a conference on the future of the national police. The conference centred on the professionalization of the national police, the reform of the Ministry of the Interior and the strengthening of linkages to the justice sector. Delegates from the national police and the Ministry noted that, as the security situation improved, the focus of the police should shift from counter-insurgency to more traditional law enforcement. They also noted the national police's pivotal role in countering corruption, promoting human rights and increasing female participation in Afghan society. Working groups will develop proposals to progress the conference agenda.

19. Although there is a growing recognition of female roles in the Afghan security forces, only 1,313 women serve in the national police, significantly below the target outlined by the Ministry of the Interior (1,753 women in its ranks by March 2012).

Afghan Public Protection Force

20. The Afghan Public Protection Force is in the process of assuming security missions from private security companies, which were outlawed by Afghan Presidential Decree 62 in August 2010.[a] To ensure a successful transfer of private security companies to the APPF, ISAF and the Government of Afghanistan also agreed on an interim solution for risk management companies to assume some former private security company missions.

21. In mid-March, private security companies were granted an extension of 30 to 90 days to transfer their activities to the Public Protection Force. This stopgap measure allowed security providers to operate under the Public Protection Force even as they pursued permanent risk management company licences. This bridging mechanism enabled the Ministry of the Interior to meet President Karzai's deadline for transitioning private security companies into the Public Protection Force by 20 March while at the same time ensuring that security for convoy operations and development sites continues uninterrupted. The Public Protection Force is expected to be ready to assume responsibility for convoy and development site security by the first week of August 2012. ISAF is working closely with the Ministry of the Interior to ensure that as the Public Protection Force matures, it continues to support commercial and development efforts. Assistance from the Public Protection Force's

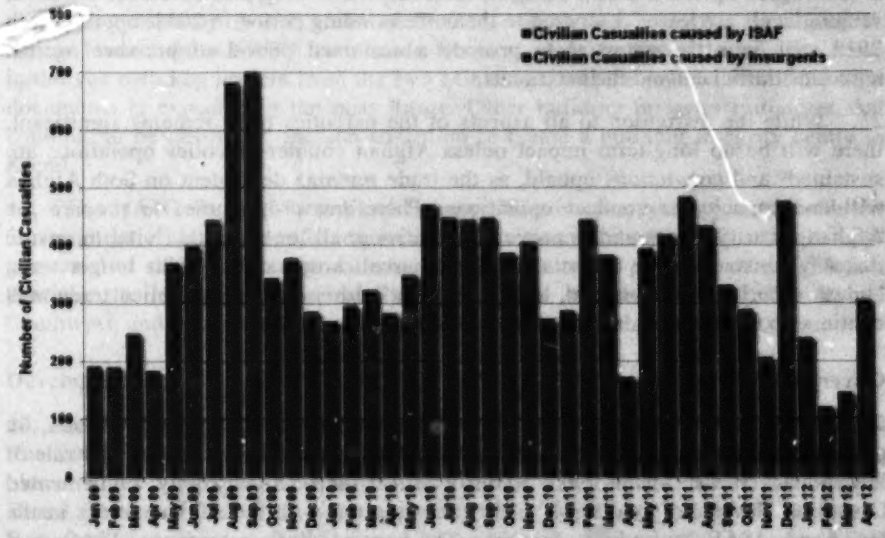
[a] According to the Presidential Decree, all security services for development projects and ISAF convoys must be transitioned to the Public Protection Force by March 2012, and security services for ISAF bases and construction sites must be transitioned no later than March 2013.

partner ministries[b] is still critical to accomplish the successful transfer of private security companies to the Public Protection Force and the overall requirements needed for the Force's goals to be met by March 2013.

Civilian casualties

22. The issue of civilian casualties is of great concern to ISAF, and the need to effectively manage the consequences of such incidents is considered critically important.

23. During the reporting period, the total number of civilian casualties decreased by 44 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. The insurgents were accountable for approximately 90 per cent of all incidents relating to civilian casualties. The number of ISAF-caused civilian casualties decreased by 62 per cent compared to the same period in 2011. It is noticeable that the number of civilian deaths caused by ISAF Air Operations and road traffic accidents decreased significantly compared to the same period in 2011. However, insurgents can still exploit and manipulate civilian casualty-related events to their advantage. The figures set out below reflect incidents of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and wounded) that have been confirmed through investigation to have been caused by either ISAF or insurgents. ISAF policy directs all credible allegations of civilian casualties to be reviewed.



Counter-narcotics

24. ISAF continues, in accordance with its mandate, to provide support to the Government's counter-narcotics programmes and operations in order to disrupt, neutralize and influence the narcotics industry and its funding of the insurgency in Afghanistan.

[b] Includes the timely issuance of visas by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, work permits by the Ministry of Labour, communication licences by the Ministry of Communication and armoured vehicle licences by the Ministry of the Interior to ensure that there is no gap in security.

25. Early reporting of this year's poppy harvest shows opium cultivation to be in keeping with original forecasts and consistent with 2011 levels. While initial indications showed that the rate of cultivation was falling in areas with better security, reporting continues to indicate the movement of farmers away from traditional growing areas towards more remote areas in Afghanistan for cultivation.

26. Movement of cultivation areas could potentially signal a shift in processing areas, as processing and trafficking activity will also shift to permissive environments created by a lack of security forces. Opium cultivation and processing remain correlated with a lack of security. While the extent of farmer and processing movement is currently unknown, this movement is a result of successful counter-narcotics efforts on the part of the Government and Afghan security forces and a significant ISAF presence, which impede the freedom of movement of narcotics in historical growing areas.

27. Insurgents continue to benefit from the narcotics trade and have begun the collection of their annual poppy harvest tax. This harvest tax remains the insurgents' largest operational income generator and is vital to the conduct of the insurgents' fighting season. As a result of pressure from ongoing Afghan security force and ISAF operations, revenues resulting from post-harvest output remain vulnerable to disruption. Operations between 1 January and 31 March 2012 have seized over 20,000 kg of opium and 18,000 kg of hashish. While drug and precursor chemical seizure levels are lower compared to the corresponding period in 2011, operations in 2012 still have the potential to provide a sustained period of pressure against narcotics traffickers and the insurgents.

28. While the disruption to all aspects of the narcotics trade remains significant, there will be no long-term impact unless Afghan counter-narcotics operations are sustained[c] and convictions upheld, as the trade remains dependent on both Afghan will and capacity to conduct operations. Therefore, programmes to prepare the Afghan security forces and improve capabilities at all levels remain vital to ensure that Afghanistan is able to sustain counter-narcotics operations in the longer term. Unless security is maintained, and corruption addressed, the narcotics trade will continue to thrive in Afghanistan.

Governance

29. ISAF continues to provide support to Afghan-led governance efforts, in particular in the key areas of transition, reintegration, counter-corruption and rule of law improvement. The Afghan security forces and ISAF jointly implemented Operation Naweed ("good news") 1391 this quarter, with the Afghan forces in the lead and ISAF providing support. The operation synchronizes ISAF and Government governance objectives and focuses efforts on addressing corruption by implementing the rule of law, building budget capacity and connecting the national and subnational levels of Government. This quarter, ISAF also continued to strengthen relationships with Government ministries, donors and international community stakeholders to keep apprised of their governance and development efforts and, where appropriate to the ISAF campaign plan, inform their decision-making on what ISAF views as its key priorities.

[c] The Afghan national drug strategy is based on eight pillars: public awareness, international and regional cooperation, alternative livelihoods, demand reduction, law enforcement, criminal justice, eradication and institution-building.

30. The transition process, which saw successful Afghan-led tranche 2 transition ceremonies, is still well under way. With the incoming implementation of tranche 3, the Afghan security forces will be in the lead for the security of approximately 75 per cent of the Afghan population.

31. Despite a significant number of insurgents (approximately 1,000) joining the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme over the period, reintegration has yet to have a decisive effect in Afghanistan. The number of reintegrated persons is currently just over 4,100 (as at the end of April 2012). The programme has not yet attracted large numbers of Pashtuns in the heartland of the insurgency, in particular in the south. Nevertheless, encouraging signs were observed in Regional Commands East and South, where the number of reintegrated persons doubled. In Regional Command Southwest, the increase was over 30 per cent, and in Regional Command West the reintegration events occurred mainly in Herat and Farah instead of Badghis, which has had the highest numbers of reintegrated persons to date. The programme is starting to take hold in Uruzgan, Kandahar and Helmand and in a small number of provinces in Regional Command East. Supported by ISAF, the programme's structures and capacity continue to develop while still encountering some difficulties at the Provincial Joint Secretariat Team level.

32. The NATO-led building integrity initiative is now ongoing to develop action plans for both the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior that focus on developing capacity in the areas of finance and human resources management. Senior leaders from NATO have made frequent visits to Kabul to advance these initiatives with key leaders from the two Ministries, and the publication of the final documents is expected in the near future. Other building integrity initiatives that continue to be developed include an option to create a building integrity centre in Kabul.

33. The NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission continues to work with the Government of Afghanistan to improve the provision of State justice with qualified personnel at the provincial and district levels. About 12 per cent of the districts continue to lack courts, especially in Regional Commands East, South and Southwest, and there is a shortage of specialist courts outside the major cities.

Development

34. In coordination with the NATO senior civilian representative, Provincial Reconstruction Team countries affected by tranches 1 and 2 delivered their evolution plans, which were endorsed and monitored by the Joint Afghan-NATO *Inteqal* Board. In accordance with those evolution plans, the Swedish-Finnish Provincial Reconstruction Team in Balkh closed its provincial offices in Samangan and Sari Pul in 2011 and officially renamed the Balkh Provincial Reconstruction Team as a Transition Support Team in March 2012. The German Provincial Advisory Team in Takhar also completed its operations and was phased out during the reporting period. Sweden and Germany have expressed their intent to continue their support to those provinces on a transient basis. Preparation for tranche 3 of the transition process is in the final phase, and evolution planning by Provincial Reconstruction Team countries that are expected to be affected by tranche 3 is well under way.

35. In parallel with the transition process, the improved capability of the Afghan security forces has proven helpful in providing stability and security in infrastructure project areas. In addition, the use of Afghan local police along Route

611 in Helmand Province has been a significant factor in improving the security situation throughout the Sangin Valley, which has made access possible and improved security at the Kajaki Dam, the main electricity producer for the southern provinces. Furthermore, in Regional Command East, the construction of the Naghlu-Jalalabad 110-kV transmission line has continued uninterrupted since the deployment of Afghan security forces and community-based security personnel in October 2011.

Children affected by armed conflict

36. ISAF (NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) have committed to collaborating in order to support the Government of Afghanistan with the implementation of the United Nations and Government action plan, signed on 11 January, to stop and prevent grave children's rights violations, including actions to prevent underage recruitment in the Afghan security forces, sexual abuse, sexual violence and the killing and maiming of children.

37. ISAF and UNAMA have jointly taken several concrete, practical steps, in particular in supporting Afghan institutions in implementing the action plan:

(a) The Commander of ISAF has directed ISAF units to report incidents of underage recruitment into the Afghan security forces or other incidents of violations against children;

(b) In a broader perspective, the Commander's Tactical Directive is supporting this issue, with special emphasis on the protection of the Afghan population against the consequences of the conflict;

(c) ISAF is financially supporting the Ministry of the Interior of Afghanistan in developing and implementing a nationwide awareness-raising campaign for the prevention of underage recruitment. Included in the campaign are the publication of pocket guides for all Afghan security force personnel, the launch of billboard campaigns and the use of radio and television messages.

38. ISAF stays committed to its support of monitoring and reporting violations against underage recruitment or any other violation against children by armed actors.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and gender perspective

39. ISAF stays committed to implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions. It has incorporated gender perspective in operational planning documents throughout the chain of command. The Commander's operational plan has a gender annex outlining how a gender perspective, including men, women, girls and boys, must be implemented as part of the overall campaign, and that, given the historical, social and cultural position of Afghan women, women's perspectives must be specifically addressed in all ISAF operations. In addition, several fragmentary orders have been released to support a number of initiatives, including an initiative that focuses on increasing the number of women in the Afghan security forces and enhancing its female engagement capability.

40. ISAF appointed personnel throughout the structure, such as gender advisers, gender field advisers, gender focal points, and staff members and tactical teams

working with female engagement, to ensure that gender perspectives are addressed and handled.

41. ISAF has strengthened and increased dialogue with Afghan women through, for example, female security *shuras*.

42. ISAF supports the Government's gender integration and awareness efforts throughout the Afghan security forces and is committed to continuing to monitor, report and support progress in this area.